

DRAFT Compatibility Determination

Use: Grant a right-of-way easement to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Refuge Name: Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies): Established October 21, 1953

Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was established as part of a dedicated wildlife area in the floodplain area of central Saginaw County. The area consisted of two units, the Shiawassee NWR administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Shiawassee River State Game Area administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Establishment of the Shiawassee Project was authorized by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission in May of 1953. Federal acquisition authorities used to acquire the Federal portion of the dedicated wildlife area were the:

Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 714-714r)

Refuge Recreation Act (16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4).

Funds for acquiring the Federal lands were primarily derived from Federal duck stamp sales. The state lands were acquired from Pittman-Robertson Act funds supplemented by state hunting license receipts

Refuge Purpose(s): Shiawassee NWR was established under the dual authorities listed above with the following purposes:

“... for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or any other management purpose, for migratory birds.”

“... suitable for (1) incidental fish and wildlife oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered or threatened species....”

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission: The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Description of Use: Granting the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) a perpetual right-of-way (ROW) easement through the Walker Tract on Miller Road. The easement will be 33 ft X 850 ft and occupy 0.64 acres. The ROW will encompass an existing access road that was a ROW for the Saginaw County Road Commission. The north end of the ROW will intersect with the south terminus of Miller Road. The south end of the ROW will terminate at the boundary of the Shiawassee River State Game Area (SGA) at Swan Creek.

The ROW will enable the DNR to construct a bridge across Swan Creek connecting the refuge to the SGA. A bridge existed at this site for more than 50 years, but it was removed in 2004 due to

safety concerns over deterioration. The ROW will be used by the public to access the northern portion of the SGA by foot or bicycle for pursuit of wildlife-related recreation. It will also permit vehicular access by the DNR to manage and administer the SGA.

Availability of Resources: The Service will incur minimal expense to grant and administer the ROW easement. The refuge will spend about five staff days to prepare supporting information and issue the ROW permit. The annual administrative cost of monitoring the use of the ROW will be minimal because refuge staff uses the service road periodically throughout the year in the course of normal refuge operations. Therefore, no special monitoring activity will be required.

Anticipated Impacts of Use: Habitat effects will be negligible because the footprint of the easement is entirely occupied by existing roadway. Bridge construction may yield bare soil areas. Soil erosion and sedimentation will be minimized through installation of silt fence and re-seeding. Noise and activity from road maintenance, bridge construction, and people using the ROW to access the SGA will cause short-term, negligible disturbance of wildlife.

Public Review and Comment: A public review and comment period will be provided for 30 days from X through X, 2016. Solicitations for comment will be distributed via a news release to print, television, and radio media. Comments will also be requested on the refuge's web site. Paper copies of the document will be available at Green Point Environmental Learning Center (Gabriel Rd., Saginaw, MI) and refuge headquarters (6975 Mower Rd., Saginaw, MI).

Determination:

_____ Use is Not Compatible

 X Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations:

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Public use of the ROW will be limited to foot and bicycle traffic only. Public access will be during daylight hours only. All maintenance of the ROW will be the responsibility of the DNR. Silt fence and re-seeding will be employed to prevent soil erosion and sedimentation in areas of exposed soil.

Justification: The ROW will yield inconsequential impacts to refuge wildlife and habitats. The refuge will incur negligible costs for providing the ROW.

The Service and Michigan DNR have a 60-year agreement to cooperate in management of the Shiawassee NWR and Shiawassee River SGA. Establishing the ROW and constructing the bridge will increase public use of the SGA in an area directly adjacent to the refuge. The public has expressed demand for greater access to the SGA for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, hiking, biking, and other activities, particularly in this area. The ROW will also permit more efficient and effective management of wildlife habitat on the SGA. Enhancing access to the Shiawassee River SGA is in the best interest of the refuge and the conservation of wildlife and habitat in the greater Shiawassee Flats region as a whole.

Signature: **Refuge Manager:** _____

Signature and Date

Concurrence: Regional Chief:

Signature and Date

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-evaluation Date: 2026